



NEWS

Federal Communications Commission
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 14, 2002

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FCC EXPLORES OPTIONS AND ALTERNATIVES FOR IMPROVING THE SPECTRUM ENVIRONMENT FOR PUBLIC SAFETY OPERATIONS IN THE 800 MHZ BAND

Washington, D.C. – The Federal Communication Commission (FCC) has adopted a Notice of Proposed Rule Making (NPRM) to explore ways to improve the spectrum environment for public safety operations in the 800 MHz band. In the NPRM, the Commission stated that increasing levels of harmful interference to public safety communications in the 800 MHz band must be remedied. The NPRM seeks comment on all available options and alternatives. This action supports one of the Commission's key goals of ensuring public safety agencies have access to adequate spectrum to support their critical missions.

Background:

The Commission has long recognized that the nation's public safety agencies require effective radio communications systems free of harmful interference if they are to adequately protect the safety of lives and property. One of the important bands that the Commission has made available for public safety communications is at 800 MHz, which was first designated for public safety use in 1980. In the ensuing years, public safety agencies have been implementing new systems in this band; but, recently, these systems have been subjected to increasing incidents of harmful interference from neighboring commercial providers. Recent industry and public safety reports have documented the interference problems in the 800 MHz band. The issue of interference in this spectrum has also been raised in a White Paper submitted to the Commission by Nextel Communications, Inc.

Specifics of the NPRM:

In the adopted NPRM the Commission solicits comment on how best to remedy interference to 800 MHz public safety systems consistent with minimum disruption to our existing licensing structure and assurance of sufficient spectrum for critical public safety communications. The FCC also seeks comment on a Petition for Rule Making filed by the Personal Communications Industry Association (PCIA) seeking amendment of Section 90.621 of the Commission's Rules. Finally, by incorporating the record in WT Docket No. 99-87, which deals with matters related to the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the Commission requests comment on the terms and conditions of licenses in the 900 MHz land mobile band if it is used to relocate displaced licensees.

The Commission noted its primary objective in this proceeding is to explore all available options and alternatives for improving the spectrum environment for public safety operations in the 800 MHz Band. Specifically, the adopted NPRM takes the following actions:

- Describes the current configuration of the 800 MHz band for public safety and non-public safety systems.
- Discusses the causes of interference to public safety communications.

- Tentatively concludes that increasing levels of harmful interference to public safety communications on the 800 MHz band must be remedied.
- Discusses various means of reconfiguring the 800 MHz band in a manner that will effectively minimize interference to public safety radio systems from Commercial Mobile Radio Service (CMRS) stations.
- Requests information on the amount of spectrum sufficient to meet the needs of public safety.
- Discusses means of handling licensing and frequency coordination if the 800 MHz band is restructured and incumbent 800 MHz licensees are relocated to other suitable bands.
- With respect to any necessary incumbent relocation, discusses potential relocation bands and who would be reimbursed for relocating and who would pay the associated cost.
- Considers complementary means of reducing interference to 800 MHz public safety communications in addition to reconfiguration of the 800 MHz frequency band, including receiver standards, stricter limits on out of band emissions and more robust public safety signals.
- Describes and discusses PCIA's petition for rule making seeking to consolidate the Business and Industrial/Land Transportation pools.
- Requests comment on the terms and conditions of licenses in the 900 MHz land mobile band if it is used to relocate displaced licensees

Action by the Commission March 14, 2002, by Further Notice of Proposed Rule Making (FCC 02-81). Chairman Powell, Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Martin with Commissioners Abernathy, Copps and Martin issuing separate statements.

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WT Docket No. 02-55